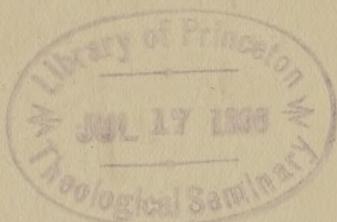
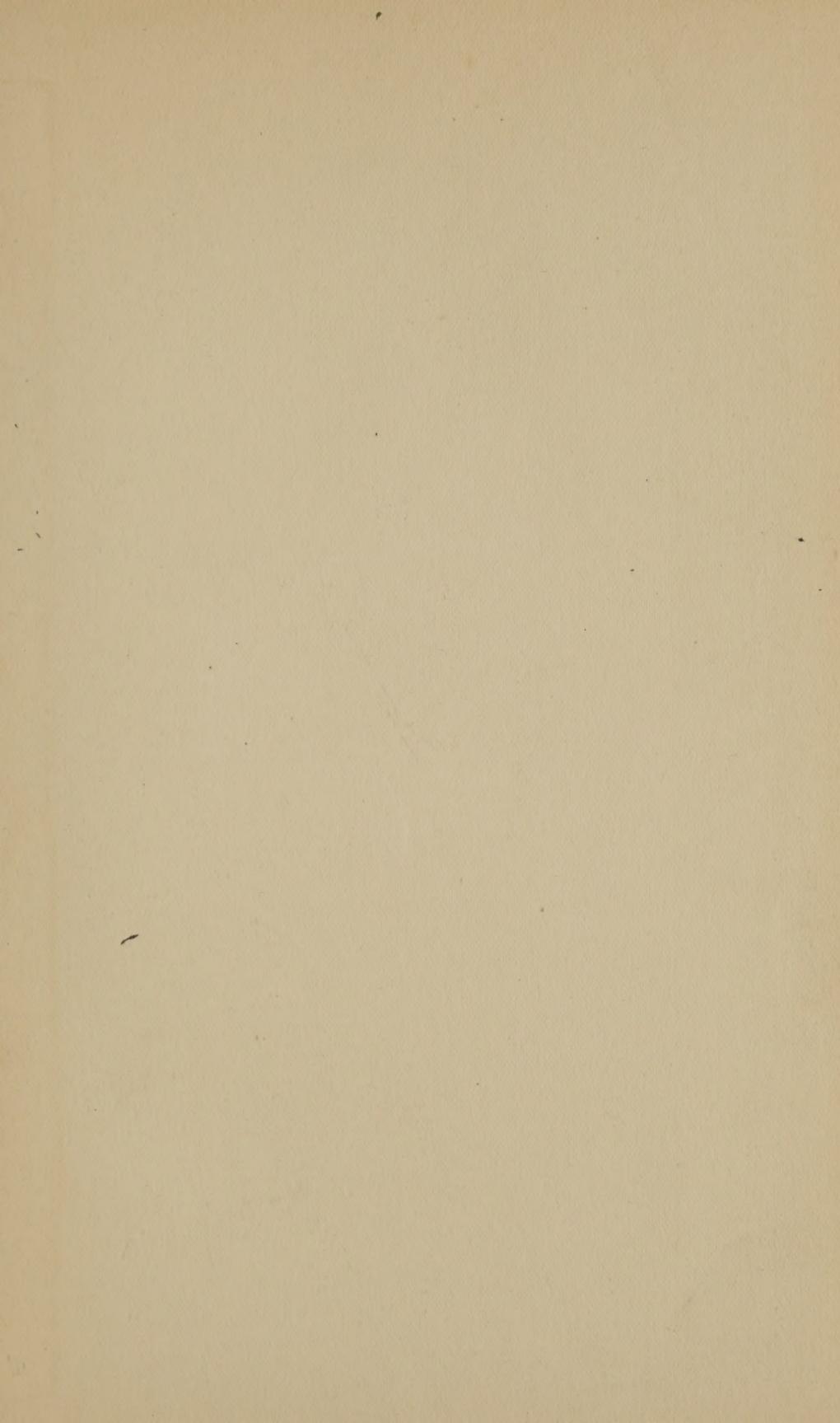


ORATION
IN HONOR OF
COL. WILLIAM PRESCOTT
BY
WILLIAM EVERETT





E 207 .P75 E83 1896
Everett, William, 1839-1910
Oration in honor of Col.
William Prescott



Colonel William Prescott.

COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE.

ORATION

IN HONOR OF

COL. WILLIAM ✓ PRESCOTT

DELIVERED IN BOSTON, 14 OCTOBER, 1895

BY INVITATION OF THE

Bunker Hill Monument Association

BY

WILLIAM ✓ EVERETT

BOSTON

PUBLISHED BY THE ASSOCIATION

1896

University Press
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

PREFACE.

AT a meeting of the Standing Committee of the BUNKER HILL MONUMENT ASSOCIATION, held on the twenty-ninth of July, 1895,—

The President stated that Colonel WILLIAM PRESCOTT died on the thirteenth of October, 1795, and that it had been suggested that the Association should hold a Memorial Service to commemorate the Centennial of that event. It was —

Voted, To hold a Service October 14th, 1895, in commemoration of the Life and Public Services of Colonel WILLIAM PRESCOTT, and that an invitation be extended to Hon. WILLIAM EVERETT to deliver an Oration on the occasion.

It was also voted that a Committee of Arrangements should be appointed by the President, who selected the following named gentlemen: Mr. HENRY H. EDES, Dr. BENJAMIN APTHORP GOULD, Dr. J. COLLINS WARREN, the Hon. GEORGE S. HALE, Col. ARNOLD A. RAND, the Rev. EDWARD G. PORTER, and Mr. HENRY E. WOODS.

The Commemorative Service was held in Dr. Hale's Church on the evening of Monday, the fourteenth of October. In the pulpit, which was decorated with

flags and tropical plants, beside Dr. EVERETT, sat the Hon. FREDERIC W. LINCOLN, the President of the Association; CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, LL.D., President of the Massachusetts Historical Society; BENJAMIN APTHORP GOULD, LL.D., President of The Colonial Society of Massachusetts; Mr. ABNER CHENEY GOODELL, JR., Vice-President of the Essex Institute; the Hon. WINSLOW WARREN, President of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati; the Rev. Dr. JOSEPH HENRY ALLEN, the Rev. Dr. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, and Mr. HENRY HERBERT EDES.

A large and distinguished audience was in attendance, including delegations from many of the patriotic organizations designed to perpetuate the memory of the men who served faithfully and well the American Colonies, Provinces, and States,—as well at the Council Board as in the field. Prominent among these were the Massachusetts Society of the Colonial Dames of America, the Warren and Prescott Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Massachusetts Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States. In the unavoidable absence of the Governor of the Commonwealth, His Honor, ROGER WOLCOTT, the Lieutenant-Governor, was present with a delegation from the Governor's Staff. The Prescott family, with which the Lieutenant-Governor is allied by marriage, was largely represented; and the same may be said of the Federal and

State Bench and Bar, of the other learned professions, of Science and the Arts, and of Commerce.

Letters of regret were received from many gentlemen whose public engagements precluded their attendance. Some of these letters will be found on subsequent pages.

The Exercises proceeded in accordance with the Programme printed on pp. 13–15, *post*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
FORM OF INVITATION	10
ORDER OF EXERCISES	13
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, BY MR. HENRY H. EDES .	17
INVOCATION, BY DR. JOSEPH H. ALLEN	21
ORATION, BY THE HON. WILLIAM EVERETT	23
LETTERS OF REGRET	61

FORM OF INVITATION & &

WILLIAM PRESCOTT.

Born 20 February, 1726 . . . Died 13 October, 1795.

THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT ASSOCIATION invites you to be present at a Service in commemoration of

Col. William Prescott,

who commanded the American forces in the redoubt at Bunker Hill, to be held in the South Congregational Meeting-House, corner of Exeter and Newbury Streets, Boston, on Monday Evening, 14th instant, at 8 o'clock.

An Oration will be delivered by the Honorable WILLIAM EVERETT, LL.D.

In furtherance of the purpose of the Association to make this a patriotic and distinctively American occasion, in the highest and best sense, invitations have been sent to the officers of The Society of the Cincinnati, The Society of the Colonial Dames of America,

The Massachusetts Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, and other associations of a kindred nature. All members of such societies who may be present are respectfully requested to wear their Insignia.

Upon your acceptance of this invitation a ticket of admission will be sent to you.

A reply is respectfully requested by or before Thursday, 10th instant.

HENRY H. EDES,
BENJAMIN A. GOULD,
J. COLLINS WARREN,
GEORGE S. HALE,
ARNOLD A. RAND,
EDWARD G. PORTER,
HENRY E. WOODS,
Committee of Arrangements.

BOSTON, 5 October, 1895.



ORDER OF EXERCISES & &

BUNKER HILL MONUMENT ASSOCIATION.



Commemorative Service

IN HONOR OF

COL. WILLIAM PRESCOTT,

*In the South Congregational Meeting-House,
Boston,*

14 OCTOBER, 1895.



WILLIAM PRESCOTT.

Born 20 February, 1726 . . . Died 13 October, 1795.

Order of Exercises.

PRELUDE BY THE ORCHESTRA.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY.

ANTHEM.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY MR. HENRY H. EDES,
Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements

INVOCATION

BY THE REVEREND JOSEPH H. ALLEN, D.D.

BALLAD OF BUNKER HILL.

BY GEORGE LUNT.

FAST fled morn's shadows gray,
And with the breaking day
Our hearts grew still;
But ere that ruddy beam
Tinged Mystic's silent stream,
Flashed the red cannon's gleam
By Bunker Hill.

Morn saw our rampart crowned,
Nor pierced our turf-clad mound
Their iron storm;
Then ceased that fiery shower;
Gathered the foe his power;
Welcome the desperate hour—
His squadrons form!

We from our fort's low crest,
Our muskets down at rest,
Glance in a row;
There, not a drum-beat stirred,
But "Steady!"—all we heard—
"Keep your fire, wait the word,
Then, boys, aim low!"

They form — brief space they
grant —
Not one rebuff must daunt
Stout English hearts;
Quick-step their columns tread,
Pigott, none nobler led,
And Howe is at their head —
They 'll play their parts.

Away the war-cloud rolled;
Prescott, our captain bold,
True soldier known—
He cried—"One more brave
blow,
Once more repel the foe,
And England's King shall grow
Pale on his throne!"

Oh, for one volley more!
Ah, dear-spent flasks, your store
Fails at the worst!
See, o'er the bastion's verge
Their furious way they urge,
And in, like surge on surge,
Headlong they burst!

Through dust and smoke and
heat,
Step by step, we retreat,
Inch by inch given;
Then, deadliest of the whole,
Some random volley's roll
Warren's great martyr-soul
Ushered to Heaven!

So Bunker Hill was won,
And great deeds, that day done,
World-wide grew known;
When victory was but shame,
Defeat, eternal fame,
And Time one blazing name
Gained, all his own!

INTRODUCTION

BY THE HONORABLE FREDERIC W. LINCOLN,
President of the Association.

ORATION

BY THE HONORABLE WILLIAM EVERETT, LL.D.

THE LOST CHORD.

(*Sir Arthur Sullivan.*)

CORNET, ORGAN, AND ORCHESTRA.

BENEDICTION.

BY THE REVEREND CHARLES BABBIDGE, D.D.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

BY HENRY H. EDES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The Charter of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, signed by Governor Eustis on the seventh of June, 1823, declares the purpose of the incorporation to be “the construction of a monument in Charlestown to perpetuate the memory of the early events of the American Revolution.” The Association, however, has always felt that it also had other duties to perform. Accordingly, its Annual Meeting, on the anniversary of the Battle, is usually dignified by an Address of an historical or patriotic character. Upon several great occasions, the foremost orators of their time have been summoned to recount the story of the battle and the men of Bunker Hill. Webster and Everett, Devens and Winthrop have, in turn, held vast audiences spell-bound by their splendid periods ; and to-night, we are to enjoy the privilege of listening to a scholar, and an orator of the first rank, whose attainments in the field of letters have made him known in two continents and have earned for him the right to inscribe his name below that of Mr. Winthrop on that limited roll.

It is a matter of deep regret to us all that the honored and revered Dr. Charles Babidge is detained at his home in Pepperell by the weight of years and bodily infirmities. For sixty-two years he has been the faithful and beloved minister of the church where Colonel Prescott worshipped and where four generations of his descendants have known the ministrations of the same saintly pastor. I do not forget that my part

in the services of this evening should be brief, but I am sure that you would not excuse me if I omitted to read to you a part of a most interesting letter which has been received from Dr. Babbage : —

PEPPERELL, Oct. 9th, 1895.

DEAR MR. EDES,— Each succeeding day makes it more and more evident that I am too old and enfeebled to appear in public again. I shall enter deeply into the spirit of the 14th ; but it can only be “in the spirit.”

The very name of Bunker Hill is, to me, a powerful stimulant. In our Pepperell Celebrations, I was, for many years, “The Stock Orator.” In the earlier years of my figuring as the Bunker Hill orator, I had in my audience, fully a score of men who had taken a part in the battle. I had listened to their stories of the details of the battle; and it is to me a matter of deep regret that I did not put on record many interesting facts that have now passed forever from our reach.

Let me relate a little incident in which Bunker Hill is a prominent feature. As our regiment (the “Old Sixth”), was passing down Broadway, in New York City, at the opening of the rebellion, we halted for a moment in the midst of the thousands who filled the streets. At this moment, a gentleman approached me, mistaking me for one who held a much higher rank than that of a Chaplain, and asked me, from where the regiment had come. To simply reply, “from Middlesex County,” would have been no reply at all. I therefore, to make the matter clear, answered, “Bunker Hill.” Judge of my astonishment when, shortly after the war, I listened to a lecture by George William Curtis, delivered at Nashua, N. H., in which, relating the little incident above narrated, he spoke of asking “a gray-bearded veteran of the regiment,” where it had come from, and receiving the reply uttered in emphatic tones, “Bunker Hill.”

The joke of the thing consists in his mistaking me, a dapper youth of only fifty-four years, for an *old* soldier, a regular “vieux moustache.” After the lecture I tried to make my way to the lecturer, in order to correct his mistake in regard to my personality, but the crowd of friends who surrounded him, made this impossible. But now my marching days are all over ; and eighty-nine years have settled the question of my being a veteran.

I have no apology to make for my prolixity. But there is one consideration that may afford you consolation. You will never again receive a letter from one who, like myself, played, in his childhood, in and out of the Redoubt on Bunker Hill, while it still remained precisely as it was when Prescott left it, and when Warren moistened it with his blood.

Most respectfully, yours,

CHARLES BABBIDGE.

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, it remains for me to vacate the Chair that it may be taken by a great-grandson of Paul Revere. I present to you, as the presiding officer of the evening, the President of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, the Honorable FREDERIC W. LINCOLN.

INVOCATION.

BY THE REV. DR. JOSEPH H. ALLEN.

O LORD GOD, FATHER ALMIGHTY, who dost bestow upon thy chosen sons wisdom, understanding, and strength, that they may fitly guide, defend, and govern thy people !

We praise thee in the honored memory of our fathers, who with strong hands and valiant hearts laid the foundation of those liberties, which by their wise counsels are still protected and maintained ;

We praise thee in the proud memory, brought to our hearts this day, of those who, though in defeat and pain, yet aided to win for their native land the far-off blessings of liberty and peace ;

We praise thee in the living memory of those who in our own day, inspired by that high example, restored in our Commonwealth and Nation the wavering faith in liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable !

Inspire us also, O Lord our God, and build us up, that we may worthily enter upon the goodly heritage which we have received ; giving the service of our lives, and, if need be, the sacrifice of them, for whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and of good report.

In one great faith and hope, in fellowship together as men, as citizens of no mean city, and as sons of the Living God whose service is perfect freedom, we offer this our prayer.

AMEN.

ORATION.

NOTE.

IN the preparation of the following address, I desire to express my obligations: first, to the History of Groton, by Caleb Butler; secondly, to the History of the Siege of Boston, by Hon. Richard Frothingham; thirdly, to a MS. by Judge Prescott, seen and used by the latter writer, for a copy of which I am indebted to the very great kindness of His Honor Roger Wolcott, and of Linzee Prescott, Esq.; (since the delivery of the address, I find Mr. Frothingham printed it in the Massachusetts Historical Society's Proceedings for 1875;) fourthly, to Hon. Samuel A. Green, for very important corrections of errors into which I had inadvertently fallen. The American Archives of Peter Force and other familiar historical works have been consulted.

W. E.

ORATION.

WE have come to the end of that period of commemoration which recalled by solemn services the series of events that created and consolidated our existence as a nation. From 1874 to 1889, every year has had its own centennial anniversary. Boston Harbor, Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, the long line of ensuing battles, the Declaration of Independence, the formation of the Constitution, the first opening of the North West Territory have in turn received appropriate and grateful notice. And now, as our country's second century is rapidly following her first, one season after another marks the days when our fathers and founders themselves left the stage, and made way for their sons, who are already appearing as historic, nay almost legendary forms to us. I do not recall that any notice was taken in 1886 of the centenary of the death of Nathanael Greene, probably the greatest military genius of the Revolutionary War, second only to Washington in his influence on the great result, yet the very spot of whose burial is forgotten; nor did I hear that in 1890 Philadelphia offered any special honors at the grave of Franklin. All the more does it seem right that this association should pay a suitable tribute to the hero of Bunker Hill, our own citizen

soldier, the redoubted William Prescott, whose life of glory ended on the thirteenth of October, 1795. It is well to realize, by such commemoration, how completely the days of our own infancy are over, and to draw from it the lesson what we are to do with the legacy of the fathers when a hundred years have rolled by since one of the bravest of them put off mortality when close on threescore and ten.

It is a mistake to think of our age and its duties as though we had no past, and were entitled to begin the twentieth century as if just rescued from a deluge. We are told that Noah celebrated his deliverance from the ark by a new discovery; but it further developed a new vice, unknown to the submerged centuries. Neither have we any right, when we commemorate the fathers, to fancy that they have prescribed our absolute pattern, and we have nothing to do but to go on repeating their operations forever. Over the grave of Prescott it is right to ask who and what he was in his time; and then what ought we to do as his descendants, who have so lately laid his great grandson and namesake to rest in the ancestral home of Pepperell.

William Prescott was born in the ancient town of Groton. His family was originally derived from Lancashire, where the town of Prescot still exists in the heart of the manufacturing district. The Prescotts were among the earliest settlers of the frontier parts of Middlesex County, Lancaster, Sudbury, Concord, and later of Groton, all exposed to the fiercest incursions of the Indians. The first of the line was a blacksmith by trade, and acquired that honor which always attends

his craft, as we are told by Longfellow in a poem that we shall find concerns our hero still more nearly. He was a born fighter, and often engaged with the savages, at one time defending his house from their inroads with no other aid than his wife's, who loaded musket after musket for him to fire. He had brought with him from England a complete suit of mail, helmet, cuirass and gorget, with which he was wont to clothe himself in any contest with the Indians, and rendered as he thus was impenetrable to the heaviest blows of the tomahawk, was regarded by them as a supernatural being. His son Jonas transferred his father's trade from Lancaster to Groton, and rose to the first eminence in that venerable town, being captain in the militia, representative to the General Court, and entrusted with every other position with which a New England democracy burdens those whom it professes to honor. A Greek city would not improbably have rewarded such services as Jonas Prescott's by exempting him and his descendants forever from the payment of taxes; but that is a pitch of gratitude to which the Athens of America and her sister boroughs have not yet climbed, as I am sure the Prescotts and Lawrences of Groton are thoroughly aware.

Of Jonas Prescott's courtship a romantic story is told, how his sweetheart's parents in Sudbury steadily refused his suit, and locked his beloved Mary Loker in a room with a grated window. This harsh treatment did not shake the constancy of the lovers; but Jonas, who one would suppose would have given a new illustration of Love's contempt of locksmiths by filing the bars of the dungeon as only a blacksmith could, pre-

ferred to stand under the grating, to bide the pelting of a storm, talk to his beloved, and pray for better times. Mary Loker, still defying her parents' authority — no slight matter in the days before Philip's war — was sent by them, in a species of banishment, to what is now Sterling, then as remote and wild as the Adirondacks. Thither Jonas tracked her, and they were married in spite of all opposition, but so utterly without dowry or inheritance, that Mary's only washtub at first was the shell of a pumpkin.

From this pair has sprung a large and distinguished progeny, of whom Mary lived to see one hundred and seventy five. Her youngest son was Benjamin Prescott, born two hundred years ago. He married the daughter of Thomas Oliver of Cambridge, a member of Governor Joseph Dudley's council, belonging to a family which was of unbroken distinction in the colonial and provincial days of Massachusetts, from the arrival of Cotton to the fall of Hutchinson, and far from obscure in later days. Benjamin Prescott was a man of remarkable bodily and mental energy and, like his father, of the first consideration in the town and the province. He was a member of the General Court for many years, a lieutenant-colonel in the militia, a justice in more than one tribunal, and finally was offered, but declined, the arduous post of representative in England of the Colony, which needed some one to plead its cause on boundary and other questions, where Governor Belcher had proved anything but an efficient leader.

Benjamin Prescott died in 1738. He had seven children, three of them sons, of whom James the eldest

and Oliver the youngest son were both fully worthy of the high position to which their fathers had raised the name, standing out as leaders of men, both civil and military. Dr. Oliver Prescott is not yet forgotten, as one of the earliest members of the Massachusetts Medical Society, whose exertions have placed the physicians of our state in the very highest rank of their noble profession, for courage, science and humanity.

The sentiment of the American people, which in theory excludes all family considerations in the assignment of office, yet really takes a keen delight in studying history and biography through genealogy. The English magazines have lately contained several interesting articles on some of the great houses of England and Scotland. I commend the Prescotts to our best writers as affording a most noble and interesting theme for their pens. The illustrious scion of the stock whom we especially commemorate to-night was born on the twentieth of February 1726. He removed, while still under age, to a portion of his father's estate situated at a distance from the village of Groton, where he early followed the combative instinct of his race, by joining the military forces of the Colony, no child's play during the wars of the Austrian succession and the seven years. His name appears on a list of soldiers in the expedition to Louisbourg in 1746, and it has been thought that the intimate connection he then formed with Sir William Pepperell caused him to suggest the name of Pepperell for Groton West Parish, when it was set off as a separate district in 1753. This is probable enough; but the reputation of Sir William was such that it was almost inevitable, when two new districts

were formed from Groton, that one should be named for him and the other for Governor Shirley, the commander in chief of his Majesty's American forces.

There is no doubt also that William Prescott joined the expedition which removed the French colonists from Nova Scotia in 1755; an event which forms the theme of Mr. Longfellow's poem of "*Evangeline*," and had previously offered itself as a subject for romance to Hawthorne.

It speaks volumes for the genius of our New England poet that his version of this exile, an occurrence that undoubtedly showed many sad and painful features, has been till lately accepted without question among us, as the story of an act of unmitigated oppression by English tyrants on the most innocent and virtuous of mankind. It seems to be supposed by some persons who are of pure English blood, and whose ancestors in 1755 had no more notion of being anything but Englishmen than Washington had, that their independent station as Americans and friends of liberty is somehow strengthened by convicting England of tyranny exercised upon persons of French descent, at a time when the government of France was the most corrupt and profligate, if not the most despotic in Europe. Such persons have not found out, what indeed Mr. Longfellow does not hint in "*Evangeline*," that every English army which marched to New France was full of provincials like Prescott, who were as keen to make war on the priest-ridden French as Braddock or Amherst or Loudoun or Wolfe; that their chaplains, New England ministers of the deepest Puritan dye, looked upon every Nova Scotian as the bond-slave of the Roman Babylon; and

that the officer who shut up the men of Grand Pré in the church, and announced their sentence of deportation, was John Winslow of Marshfield, as pure a child of the Mayflower as any in the Plymouth County.

We are apt to boast of our ancestors' part in the old French war. They shared in many of its skirmishes, sieges and battles in the long seven years from Washington's trip to Venango down to the capture of Montreal, and the few occasions like the second siege of Louisbourg, where their help was not asked, were followed by them with the most sympathetic interest. The cold-blooded refusal of the Pennsylvania assembly to send aid to the Western counties met with no response from the eager sons of Massachusetts. But if we refuse to see our ancestors helping to send Evangeline and Gabriel out of Nova Scotia, we must shut them out of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, Oswego and Niagara, the Plains of Abraham and the Morro Castle.

Poets are scarcely expected to keep to the strict facts of history in choosing striking themes for their verse. I do not know that any one is angry with Mr. Longfellow for making Priscilla Mullins ride on a snow white steer a year before there had been any cattle brought over to Plymouth; or Paul Revere complete his ride to Concord, when in point of fact he was captured in Lincoln, and the news was carried on to Concord by our hero's kinsman, Samuel Prescott. But I must feel that he went beyond the bounds of legitimate adaptation when he so constructed his tale of the depopulation of Grand Pré as to paint its authors in the darkest colors, and yet suppress the fact that his

own countrymen were the ones chiefly engaged in seeing that orders were carried out.

The accounts which Mr. Longfellow had at his command in 1848 were imperfect. Since then the subject has been studied with a great wealth of original documents, French as well as English, by our own illustrious historian, the lamented Francis Parkman.* He has placed it beyond a doubt, from the facts supplied by the French archives, that the Nova Scotians were treated by their English rulers with a kindness which surprised and annoyed the ministers of Lewis the Fifteenth, who were desirous of seeing them so oppressed as to make them revolt from a dominion which was just as lawfully established by treaty as our own over Nebraska or New Mexico. The priestly agents of France were constantly trying to stir up disaffection and prevent their late subjects from accepting peaceably the rule of King George; a process the French thought utterly iniquitous when applied to their own conquests in Alsace or Lorraine; the very priest of Grand Pré, whom Longfellow truly pictures as a devoted pastor, stands in history the object of reproach for confining himself to his spiritual duties, instead of turning into an agent of revolt. One tonsured conspirator, whose restless craft was the object of aversion to the high-spirited officers of King Lewis, went indeed beyond the duties of the altar; by his means two thousand Acadians were cajoled into leaving their homes and settling beyond the limits of Nova Scotia, with miserable provision for their comfort, long before Winslow removed the inhabitants of Grand Pré and Annapolis.

* See *Montcalm and Wolfe*, Vol. I. Chap. VIII.

Moreover Mr. Parkman shows clearly that, whatever we may think of the scheme, its execution was not at all conducted with the hurry and cruelty pictured in the poem; that as far as such a thing might be, Winslow acted with humanity and consideration to those he was displacing; that the romantic exaltation of Acadians into Arcadians, indulged in by prose writers before and after Longfellow, has but little warrant in their actual lives, passed in a hard, cold, misty land, which their own beneficent native sovereigns affected to think it no hardship to leave. In a word, the entire occurrence, which is no better or worse than a score of others which owe their existence to the fiend of war, all whose children are tainted with his own corruption, has been exaggerated, weakened, distorted, perverted, in order to make out a case against Old England, in which whatever its lights and shades, New England had its full share.

At the end of William Prescott's service in Canada, he was offered a commission in the royal forces, but declined. A soldier by race and temper, he was not one by profession, any more than thousands of his comrades in the two wars. It was at this time,—the years following the peace of 1763,—that a spirit of oppression, which might tend to alienate New England from Old England, arose in the British government. I believe the Declaration of Independence is not far wrong in charging on the King of Great Britain the wrongs of the colonists. The change in the policy towards America which in twenty years turned the Prescott and Washington of 1753, the Prescott of the Bay of Fundy and the Washington of the Monongahela,

into the Prescott of Bunker Hill and the Washington of Dorchester Heights, was simply that an old, experienced, sensible king died, who had trusted his affairs for four years to the boldest and most generous spirit that ever governed a nation, and was succeeded by an obstinate, sullen youth who was determined to be the king that his mother urged him to be, and wished rather to have North govern by a corrupt parliament than Pitt rule through a sympathetic nation. From the very first speech George the Third delivered from the throne, nay, from the hour he knew of his grandfather's death, and ordered the groom who rode with him to assent to a falsehood, down to the day, forty seven years afterwards, when he used the cry of "No Popery" to reinstate a cabinet that had to put a strait jacket on him in three years George the Third is directly, personally, responsible for the alienation of the Colonies and the hostility of Ireland, not, as the fiction of English law says, because he was ill advised, but because his natural temper, which he never tried to tame, drew to him by a fatal magnetism just such advisers as would confirm his congenital faults.

There were men in possession of his ear who might at least have made an effort to enlighten his stupidity and soften his obstinacy. When he asked support in his narrow and harsh suppressions of everything like independence in the colonies or at home, he found not a few counsellors whose brilliant talents, thorough training, and wide knowledge of men, while they insured the temporary triumph at least of every cause in which they enlisted, laid upon them all the heavier responsibility of choosing the right, and acting upon

higher principles than love of office, and reverence for the King's power. Mansfield, North, Thurlow, Wedderburn, even Lord George Germain, were men of far more than average talents; some of them were able to rise to the very highest posts purely by their own genius. They were wholly beyond the Weymouths, Suffolks and Hillsboroughs, puppets whom certain American historians have made prominent merely because they happened to be officially at the head of colonial affairs. Yet these men yielded their mighty powers entirely to the King's orders, and devised methods with infernal ingenuity to keep Parliament deluded as to the true condition of America. Every one of them could have supplied every deficiency in the King's intellect if they had thought it for their interest, or even felt an inclination to tell the truth. But in every one of them there was a radical want of heart; there was a want of that principle which guides the soul by a higher wisdom how to choose between two courses where the mere intellect stands perplexed. When I contrast the counsellors who confirmed the King in his obstinate attempt to coerce the Americans with those who would have led him to wiser, milder, and, as I am old-fashioned enough to say, more legal courses,—when I contrast Mansfield with Chatham, Thurlow with Camden, Wedderburn with Fox, North with Burke, and Sackville with Conway,—I seem like one who, in his journey from the low thickets that fringe the gulf at Vera Cruz, rises to the broad plateau that surrounds the walls of Mexico. You are still environed by the luxuriance of tropical nature,—the soil still sustains a gorgeous growth that transcends all

one sees in less favored lands,—but you have left the dank and sickly jungles whose atmosphere is loaded with insidious poison, and where every noise suggests an envenomed reptile,—and you have ascended to the tempered fervor, the refreshing glow of the exalted plains where every breath is a delight, and the eye slowly climbs to the glittering summits of the transcendent peaks that lift it to the very gate of heaven.

I shall not tell again the story of the sad steps whereby Massachusetts was driven in twelve years from devoted loyalty to armed resistance. Pepperell was in line with her sisters in protest against the tyranny of the ministry, and instructed her representative James Prescott, a brother of William, to oppose a firm front to the proceedings of the royal officials. As soon as the summons to arms went through the Province, the men of Pepperell were in array. A regiment was formed in 1774, of which William Prescott was appointed Colonel, and on the morning of the nineteenth of April a messenger rode from Concord to Pepperell, arriving about ten o'clock. Colonel Prescott immediately ordered the Pepperell and Hollis companies to march to Groton, whither he himself rode ahead to arouse the Groton company; but his own neighbors, though five miles further back, had reached Groton under arms before their brethren of that place were ready to receive them, much to the chagrin of Dr. Oliver Prescott, who did not relish seeing his own men of old Groton outstripped by his brother's from the West district. The Colonel hastened on, with all of his regiment that he could muster, to Concord, and followed hard upon the track of the flying regulars,

but did not succeed in overtaking them. He was enlisted, as were most of his men, for eight months, and the venerable Dr. Babbidge certifies that every able bodied man in Pepperell had followed his call.

On the sixteenth of June a council of war was called in Cambridge by General Artemas Ward, commander in chief of the colonial troops, a noble historical name, perverted in meaning as in spelling by an amiable humorist, who one would think might have found a name for his showman without burlesquing the official predecessor of Washington. That council ordered a party drawn from the regiments of Prescott, Frye, and Knowlton, to occupy and fortify Bunker Hill, promising them relief in the morning. This council was held in the ancient dwelling to the northwest of Harvard College, which in the next generation had the honor of shielding the birth and infancy of our beloved poet Dr. Holmes. In his childhood he often heard his mother tell of the tumultuous escape of her family from Charlestown under the fire of the next day, and the boy and the man loved the ancient house which was so doubly consecrated by the memories of Bunker Hill. That house, as far as either firmness or convenience went, might be standing, and ought to be standing, at this hour. It is said that it was pulled down to satisfy the limited taste of a donor to Harvard College, who fancied the more imposing modern structure that he erected could be seen better if the lowly but venerable house were away. It was a sacrilege! The eye of any trained architect could see at once that the quaint and sturdy parsonage grouped in the truest artistic composition with its loftier neighbor; and for

its memories and associations, redolent of the most illustrious achievements and brightest names of New England in war and peace, the Holmes House ought to be standing, though every lawyer in the country were driven to seek the training of his brains in the Temple, and every gymnast the exercise of his muscles on the treadmill — that is, the bicycle.

From the green before that house the detachment set forth, blessed by the venerable President of Harvard College ; — and like most detachments sent forth under the blessing of Harvard College, it fought valiantly and got beaten. It went to Charlestown under the command of Colonel Prescott ; under the command of Prescott it remained till the end of the fight ; and if Prescott had had his heart's desire, it would have returned the very next night and retaken the hill, which he had abandoned only for want of proper ordnance and ammunition.

I do not propose to tell over again the story of Bunker Hill. It has been told repeatedly by one and another careful writer and eloquent speaker ; but by none more clearly, more thoroughly than by our late honored and beloved President, whose statue is just ready for erection ; honored in the court as in the field, that true heir of the patriots of 1776, General — Judge — Devens.

He told the story on the centennial anniversary of the battle, not merely with the love and fervor of a loyal son of the spot, but with the appreciation of a soldier, as gallant as Warren, as energetic as Putnam, as experienced as Gridley. When he recounted the various events of the night and day, the redoubt

and the parapet, the rail fence and the stone wall, Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill, going through the specific part taken by regiments, by officers, by marksmen, he knew what he was talking about, as no previous historian or orator, Bancroft or Frothingham or Webster could possibly know it. He carried us in detail and yet by system through the entire engagement, from the original fortification under the eye of Gridley at midnight, to the breathless gathering on the Convent hill when twenty four hours had passed since the detachment left the College green. There is not a dart of a bayonet, not a leap of a cannon ball, not a wound or a death that missed his eye. He pointed out, what less instructed students might see, but what from a trained soldier like him became doubly historical, that there was very little command on the day at all,—that citizen soldiers, assembled from various colonies, enlisted in many regiments, habitually taking orders, when they took any, from their own commanders, were not yet disciplined to move as one man at the word of their appointed superior; and that much of the fighting on the seventeenth of June was rather that of concentrated guerillas than of organized troops. General Devens's oration did ample justice to all those veteran officers who gave their energy and their experience to marshal, to organize, to rally the ill-assorted army,—Gridley and Knowlton and Pomeroy and Stark and Putnam. He brought out, as none can help bringing out, the inspiration afforded by the presence of the hero and martyr Warren. But he distinctly assigned the name of commander of the forces that constructed, that manned, that defended

the redoubt to the last, to him whose death we this day commemorate, the experienced, the prudent, the fearless Prescott.

When General Devens ceased his centennial oration, the eyes of all his vast audience were turned to one of the most remarkable warriors ever produced by any country. There sat on the platform William Sherman, a general whose achievements, equalling in brilliancy and persistency those of any of our own earlier heroes, Greene or Morgan or Scott or Taylor, have set him second to none of the commanders in our civil war, Grant or McClellan or Thomas, and who has impressed himself even more emphatically on his countrymen as a man,—a character unique in its stalwart force, so as to require for itself a place apart from all comparisons or periods whenever our history is written. On the seventeenth of June 1875, he rose at our President's call, and in a few straightforward, unadorned sentences, expressed what every descendant of the early founders of New England must feel on the soil of Bunker Hill, what every American feels on the battle ground where our independence was established, and then as a soldier pronounced his own independent opinion as to the honors of the battle. He gave all due credit to Warren and to Putnam; but he said of Prescott that he was the commander, and that he was the only one who exercised the functions of a commander throughout the day. From that sentence, pronounced by such a soldier at such a time, there can be, there ought to be, no appeal.

Nor did a different view prevail during the life time of Prescott. It was not till long after the death

which this day commemorates that any serious attempt was made to reverse the judgment of General Heath, himself of the council of war at Cambridge, or to revive and strengthen the statement of the funeral eulogist of General Israel Putnam, who undoubtedly played a conspicuous part on the higher summit, and to invest him with the glory of command.

General Putnam has always been a prominent figure in the eyes of his countrymen, for the part he took in the war of the Revolution. There is something about his sturdy, fiery temper, which seems the very type of the Yankee, who could play the three parts of farmer, legislator, and soldier in three days, to the equal and entire satisfaction of his own people. He was certainly prominent on the day of Bunker Hill ; he certainly held at that time the commission of Brigadier General in the extemporized army ; and it is perhaps not very strange that some of his old comrades, coupling the two things fifty years later, should have made him out to have had the chief command. Yet I cannot avoid saying that those who cherish the fame of General Putnam seem to me to make a mistake in dwelling on his exploits at Bunker Hill or attempting to weave from them an especial crown of laurel. Such orders as he did give, such contributions as he did make, seem to me to have shown more alacrity than judgment ; and if Prescott really were under his orders, he derived very little help and much embarrassment from his alleged superior. It is no very grateful duty to have to draw comparison between two men of tried valor and unquestioned patriotism. But the work that gave Bunker Hill the renown it bears ; the

defence through the long day of the breastwork and the redoubt against reiterated attacks, one and another triumphantly repelled; the final dogged resistance up to the last possible moment; the steady retreat at length, solely because Putnam and Putnam's superior had failed to furnish the needed ammunition,—this gallant, this glorious, this immortal work was achieved under the eye and by the command of William Prescott, and him alone.

In a letter written to John Adams, about two months after the battle, responding to a request for a detailed account, Colonel Prescott gives a very concise but very clear statement, with a precision worthy of Julius Caesar, of the eventful day. He speaks of himself as directing the entire movement, and alludes to no other commander. He would have fought if possible more bravely than he did, if he had known that on the heights of Braintree, ten miles away, stood Abigail Adams with her son John Quincy, then eight years old, watching the smoke as it rose from Charlestown, and explaining to her boy what meant those distant fires.

If there is any glory in that day, if, as at Thermopylae, the victor for the moment was the vanquished in the result; if the shaft on the spot enshrines more memories, and awakens more emotions than the lion of Waterloo or the bridge of Lodi; if Bunker Hill is as unalloyed a source of exultation as Dorchester or Trenton, as Saratoga or Yorktown, or alloyed by the loss of Warren alone, it is because we had on that day, commanding men unused to military orders, unwilling to do anything for a master, but ready to do all for a leader, one whose prudence, whose keenness, whose

daring, whose endurance, and a nameless power to impress himself on his fellows, may rank him with the chiefest paladins of our war, with Allen or Montgomery, with Marion or Morgan, a Wayne without his rashness, and an Arnold without his treason.

Colonel Prescott's service continued till the end of 1776 ; his regiment formed part of the Continental army in the Campaign of New York, being posted at a critical point in the defence of the city, and withdrawn with a care which his son informs us received the special commendation of Washington. But after 1776 we cease to hear of him in command of a regiment, though he appears as a volunteer in the campaign on the upper Hudson. His withdrawing from the field of arms seems to have been hastened by a serious injury, contracted in some of his farming operations at Pepperell.

In the later years of his life, he was frequently elected to the General Court, and in the insurrection of 1786 was charged with its suppression in Middlesex County, where he appeared at Concord prepared for action. He was one of those characters which entirely apart from any acquired distinction are sure to be favorites in a New England village. Large, athletic, open in his look, generous in his temper, hearty and eager to listen to the call of friendship to an extent that injured his own fortune, he lived to the last loved and honored in his own town not merely for what he had done but for what he was,—a man who could not help charming all who knew him.

He was early married to Abigail Hale, belonging to a family of whom I dare not say in this presence what

New England owes to them. It must have struck William Prescott with peculiar horror, when the news came to him during the anxious occupation of New York, that the young adventurer from his gallant comrade Knowlton's regiment, whom Howe had executed with every circumstance of insult, bore the name and perhaps the blood of his absent wife. She was one of those remarkable New England matrons who loved to exercise their minds over the most tremendous problems of the relations between God and man, a friend and correspondent of Jonathan Edwards; a victim, too, of that feeble health which for so many generations was the lot of New England's wives and mothers, before they understood that it is better to live for one's dear fathers, brothers, and sons than to die for them by inches, freezing and starving one's self to keep them fed and clothed. Yet neither her Calvinism nor her sickness prevented her ruling her household by love, watching over and guiding her beloved son far into his maturity and surviving her husband eighteen years.

That son was Judge William Prescott of Salem and afterwards of Boston. Although he has now been dead more than half a century, there have hardly died out of our atmosphere the echoes of that peculiar strain of respect in which his equals always spoke of him. I never saw him in the flesh; but from the tone in which I have always heard his name mentioned, I seem to realize how an earlier generation must have talked and thought of John Jay. He was offered by General Washington the position of confidential secretary, and, declining it for himself, recommended instead his friend and classmate Col. Tobias Lear, who won, as history

abundantly shows, the strongest attachment of our sainted leader.

Judge Prescott was a member of that remarkable assembly, which has become to our Southern brethren a name of legendary horror, the Hartford Convention. We have his own emphatic testimony,—and a truer man never spoke,—that nothing was farther from the thoughts of that gathering of grave and acute men than a dissolution of the Union, or anything that even looked in that direction.

In naming him no Boston speaker must ever omit to name his revered wife, who went about our streets on errands of good so constantly, that no one ever thought of her without a benediction, before the days when fussy organizations had squeezed half the heart out of practical charity.

About thirty six years ago, William Hickling Prescott, the son of William and Catherine, the grandson of William and Abigail, followed his ancestors to the grave. If the present generation, enslaved by those it fancies to be more scientific or more philosophical historians, is tiring of the simple and dignified contributions of Prescott to history,—if the charm of his social intercourse, always confined to a select few, is now even less than a memory, at least Americans never can afford to forget the matchless example he sets them of devotion to duty for duty's sake.

Mr. Prescott was born to an independent fortune, which entirely exempted him from all necessity for work; he was in the centre of interests, domestic and social, which might easily and naturally have occupied his time with the full consent of all who knew him;

and an accident in early youth had reduced his sight to a condition which might well be considered to excuse any man from laboring beyond the direst necessity. His disposition was to indolence and self-indulgence, though his natural tastes were far too pure and elevated for that latter word to become one of reproach. But before every thing else he was a Christian ; and a Christian of that type that will not allow any authority but conscience to determine the meaning of the Parable of the Talents. He thought that idleness was a sin, at least for himself, for he was not one to prescribe duties to others. He deliberately laid out for himself a task of historical writing, which might have shaken many a stouter frame and appalled many a hardier spirit. He gathered round him a mass of original material of portentous size and cost ; "starving in the midst of plenty," his feeble eyes had to wait till he had trained a secretary to unfold its stores to him ; he listened, he compared, he judged, he noted, at length he wrote ; yet all so purely from a sense of duty, that when his first work was done, he was only induced to publish it by the solicitations of Mr. Sparks, a brother historian, and as staunch a friend as ever lived, for he must have seen that the fascination of Mr. Prescott's work would far eclipse his own. He attained to a fame of which he had never dreamed ; he set the glory of American literature at home and abroad on a height from which it never can descend. Yet not a cloud of vanity or conceit ever passed over the spotless mirror of his soul ; for he had performed his work because he thought he ought to, with a courage as ardent, and a determination as firm, as those which had armed his ancestor on

Bunker Hill in the teeth of obstacles not more formidable to the soldier than were those which he encountered to the all but sightless scholar. If we have preached for a century to our young men that love of Right and Country and God could so tame the fiery spirit of Washington as to give him the air of cold dignity, let us tell them that two generations after Washington there passed from earth a worker from whom wealth and indolence and blindness could not withhold the crown of patient and triumphant industry.

And now, fellow citizens, having paid our tribute to the memory of that great name to whom the thirteenth of October belongs, let us shortly reflect on the lesson which its centennial day brings to us. I need not tell you that a century ago the United States had sunk for the third time into a despondency almost equal to those of 1778 and 1786. Washington had indeed been re-elected, but he had already become the mark of insults and cabals as wretched as those of Lee or Conway. The burst of patriotic enthusiasm which had hailed the new Constitution, recalling even the days of Bunker Hill, had degenerated into its hateful and detestable travesty, the spirit of party ; party,—that supposed necessity of “ practical politics,” which is really a lumbering, antiquated and unpractical method of enabling a free people not to do it.

Distracted by every element of faction at home, our country could hardly see a bright spot in the outside heaven. The Indian tribes, France, Spain, England, were all indicating a clear conviction that the ruin of

the infant country was a question of time, and that the year 1800 would see the sixteen states broken up and recombined at the will of their enemies. There was everything to discourage and nothing to cheer.

What our country has done since 1795 is known to the world. Our territories, which then appeared too large for any possible control, have expanded till the continent seems too narrow for our ambition. Our population has spread over them in haughty triumph, developing, as fast as it spreads, the untold treasures of field and forest and mine; we have trampled the savage tribes beneath our feet, exterminating them like the very wolves and panthers; cities, outshining the Babylon that saw the death of Alexander, have sprung up on plains and harbors unknown to Columbus, and almost to Washington himself. In this development, we have armed ourselves with scientific and mechanical enginery, utterly unknown to former ages, and much of it of our own invention. The republican principles of government, with which we began our national life, have never for an hour been abandoned, but the Constitution and the Union have been maintained throughout our vast land; the hopes which such institutions awaken have attracted from other lands portentous numbers of immigrants; yet the original stock which elected Washington to the Presidency has contrived to absorb and assimilate all these, giving birth to a nationality singularly individual, yet unmistakably the heir of its original elements. This new people has stood up in the face of its sister nations, exhibiting every quality which is needed for the loftiest and most imperial position, showing a mastery of commerce and

diplomacy, and a capacity, if called upon, for the hardest tasks of war. With all these cares upon us, we have instituted education, in all its branches, from the highest to the lowest ; we have made domestic comfort and luxury the possession of the many and not of the few ; we have asserted ourselves as masters in science and literature, and are eagerly assailing the citadels where are locked the trophies of decorative art ; we have succeeded, after struggles of Titanic proportions, in eradicating the foulest weed that was choking the fairer growth of our soil ; yet the religion which came to us with our very being we have never renounced, and although the bold spirit of a young nation refuses to submit to the dogmatism of older and quieter lands, our whole people makes solemn holiday, every year attended with greater manifestations of respect and love, of the day named for the Savior of Mankind.

If it seems to you that I have stated these points in our national progress somewhat coldly, it is not that my own heart does not swell with pride to recount my country's glories, but because her praises are sounded every day loudly and arrogantly enough by thousands of ardent children, who think patriotism consists in seeing only what is glorious in our country's history and exaggerating it into the bargain ; who adopt the infernal sentiment, originally, I believe, proclaimed by Stephen Decatur, "Our country, may she always be in the right ; but, right or wrong, may she always be victorious," subsequently abridged into "Our country, right or wrong"; — a sentiment worthy of one who sacrificed his genius and his laurels to the Moloch of duelling.

The very love we bear to our country, the very pride we take in her success, the very conviction we entertain that there is no crown of national honor not within our reach, should lead us to accept nothing but perfection; to acknowledge and note her shortcomings with the determination that they shall be corrected, as they can be, and the motto of every true patriot be Caesar's,

“Think nothing done, while aught remains to do.”

We are not content with merely repeating, even on a grander scale, the same kind of successes that shine in earlier history; we claim to have done better as well as more than former nations; and in many ways we have done so. Let us then, with sad allegiance to truth, also record that in our dealings with the native tribes we have combined cruelties worthy of Cortez or Pizarro with a refined dishonesty all our own; that we have allowed party spirit, against which Washington solemnly warned us,* and which Jackson called a monster,† so to dominate our counsels as to threaten the Union itself, and to extirpate slavery only by calling to aid its sister fiend of war; that the iron roads wherewith we have belted the continent have had their tracks laid not so much upon wood or iron as upon the patrimony of orphans and the wages of laborers, their engines fed with fraud for fuel and corruption for water; that we have alternately flattered and insulted the emigrants who have flocked to our shores, till more than one of our great cities hold a population

* *Farewell Address; Works, Vol. XII.* pp. 225, 226.

† *Letter to Monroe, in Life, by Parton, II.* 361.

more menacing to the legacy of our fathers than would be the mobs of Naples and Constantinople.

These blots on our escutcheon I would not name if I did not feel that the conscience of the nation is already aroused for their removal, and did I not believe that there is already stirring among us a higher public morality, which is not going to be satisfied with such ethics as satisfied Themistocles or Cicero or Walpole or Guizot, or even Hamilton and Jefferson, but is determined to have America clean to her heart's core, the first of nations in gentleness and honesty, as in wealth and power. To this end it behoves every citizen to be at work.

I propose therefore to take this occasion to warn you of a danger which I believe besets us at this time,—where our country has not advanced as far as she ought in a century,—and where sentiments which ought to be relegated with idolatry and slavery to the rusty museums of barbarism are repeated and cherished as if they were the essence of patriotism.

In the year that William Prescott died, the whole country was agitated by the discussion of the treaty with Great Britain, just negotiated by John Jay. That treaty put an end at once to a score of questions left unsettled by that of 1783; it placed us in possession of our frontier forts; it extended our commerce; above all, it gave us peace with England at a time when we were actually overshadowed by the cloud of coming war with France, which burst into a shower of hostilities in a year or two. It was true that it left unsettled many points of contention, points that in seventeen years we went to war about and left unsettled after

nearly three years' fighting; points that never have been formally settled to this day, but have been worn out by the progress of humanity. But it was assailed as if it had given back the Union to King George, and asked for a British regiment to be quartered in Philadelphia. The passion of wrath and ignorance and malice that blazed forth in city after city, beginning with Boston, and spread to state after state, sparing not even Washington in its fury, vented itself with peculiar virulence on John Jay, the author of the treaty. Yet if there is a historical fact beyond dispute, it is that John Jay could do no wrong; that his wisdom, his love of country, his Christian virtue never failed or even faltered in a single action of his entire life. In his treaty, so far from betraying or even jeopardizing his country's honor, he had risen to a height of patriotic foresight far beyond even wise and good men in his own day, by recognizing and acting on the grand principle that peace is in itself a good thing, that war is in itself a bad thing, and that rumors of wars are worst of all.

Since then our country has had some wars and many treaties. It has proved, what needed no proof, that the sons of the Pilgrims and the Hollanders, the Scotch-Irish and the Huguenots, can suffer and dare anything that the war god lays upon or before his votaries. We have had every laurel that the victor weaves with bloody hand decking the brow of our soldiers and sailors. Every story and every incident of siege and camp and line and squadron that can make the eyes glow and the lips part and the heart beat has been repeated again and again in our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of

battles and wanderings. We have heard the brays and screams of the spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife, and those mortal engines whose rude throats counterfeit the thunders of immortal Jove; we have had our eyes dazzled and our ears stunned with all the pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war.

We have enjoyed to the full all its coincident and inevitable wrongs; the waste, the blunders, the corruptions, the jealousies, the intrigues,—the ravaged fields, the blazing villages, the stifling prisons, the deadly camps, the sickly sieges, the desolate homes, the widows and the orphans pining for husbands and fathers; we have seen the war demon claiming as his prey the very sons who just because they were the bravest of the brave in the field, would have been the truest of the true in the court and the senate; we have seen our Warrens, our Montgomerys, our Mercers, and our Pulaskis lost to us never to return, and our Arnolds, our Lees, our Gateses, our Conways spared to ruin us by treachery or stupidity. And, at last, when fighting has stopped, and what we call peace has come, because one or both belligerents are exhausted, there have remained the rankling sores, the unsated passions, fiends that it was so easy to raise by one blast of a trumpet, but that will not be laid by a generation of laborious incantation.

How much we have gained by treaties, by determining that whatever the points of difference with other lands, we will not, must not go to war, I could not tell you in a week. In actual land and treasure we have gained much; in the very prestige and

national honor which war is held to establish, we have gained scarcely less by the victories of peace; but we have gained most of all, every time that we have made a peaceful settlement, however little it satisfied our proud demands, by the very fact that it was peace and not war, that there had been one more conquest over the uncouth and hateful idol of battles, whom the great bard of battles denounced by the lips of the Supreme Father,—

“Of all the gods that tread the spangled skies
Thou most unjust, most odious in our eyes!”

And yet there are men among us now, who after a century from Jay's treaty, talk as the fire-eaters of that day talked. They want war; they want it for national honor; they want it that America may show she is not afraid; that the United States are all ready and eager to copy the older nations of the world, which they are constantly boasting to have surpassed and outstripped, in the old barbaric, classic, mediæval, expensive, stupid, wicked business of blows and wounds and slaughter, and all the wasteful, hideous horrors of conflict; that we have no better, no higher means of winning the respect of foreign lands than were known to the endless list of conquerors during four thousand, rather let us say forty thousand years of human suffering, from Sesotris to Von Moltke, repeating the same sort of operations with a little more ghastly accuracy in killing. The United States, the land of invention, of progress, of Christian Endeavor, of countless philanthropic movements, has no better method to offer for the development of youth, than the extension of military drill, as the best means of teaching

obedience and order, in case we ever have another war !

In case we ever have another war ! Can it be that Americans will coolly start that supposition, not as a horrible remote possibility, a second Chicago conflagration or St. Bartholomew massacre, but as a not unlikely event ? It would seem as if they did, by the way they catch hold of every rumor, invented out of the whole cloth by sensational correspondents, that somebody somewhere is going to do something which the United States would not exactly like ; though in fact it would be none of our business if it were true.

Such men are very eager to enforce by arms the Monroe doctrine, which declares that the United States cannot consent to have any part of the American continent brought into the system of the European sovereigns. Do we wish by our own act to bring ourselves into that system ? Do we wish to emulate the enormous armies, the colossal squadrons, the Titanic expenditures, the portentous taxation which is fast driving the new born Italy, lately the hope of the world, into bankruptcy, and keeping all the other glorious nations of Europe in one endless state of distrust and jealousy ; endless, that is, until some nation, wiser and more progressive than her sisters, shall begin the process of disarming, and show, what is generally the case, that the highest ideal morality is the purest practical common sense ?

I appeal to those before me who know what war is. There are not a few here who gave themselves up, when their country called, to the hardships and dangers of a service, as exhausting as the wars of Napoleon or

Frederic. You know what the word “war” means. The laurels that have been heaped upon you by your fellow citizens have not blinded your eyes or weakened your judgment; and I know you feel with me that of all things to be deprecated, avoided, abhorred by this country, a foreign war would be the worst; another civil war we will not even think of.

O, if half the energy that is displayed in inventing infernal machines to destroy each other were turned to invent new modes of peace and conciliation, what might not be effected! Such achievements belong to the very highest development of intellect and character. In December, 1861, the action of Commodore Wilkes in taking the Confederate commissioners out of the Trent had almost fanned into a flame the enmity of many persons in England to America. The insolent and flippant statesman who then governed her, while too astute to lead the countries into war, would have been very willing to tease them into it. He addressed a despatch demanding the surrender of the Commissioners in terms that if transmitted to Washington would in all probability have caused its rejection as an insult, with what consequences I hardly dare to imagine. The despatch went for approval to Windsor Castle, and there Prince Albert, with no constitutional authority, but with a wisdom and a humanity above all praise, himself softened the ferocious demand till it became one that America might grant with dignity. He died in a few days, having led his self-suppressing life utterly unknown and misunderstood, nay disliked and laughed at by the nation; but his last public act had saved his country and ours from war,—had in

fact enabled us to save our Union ; and his stainless soul took its premature flight under our Lord's promise that " the peacemakers are blessed, for they shall be called the children of God."

Do you tell me that such sentiments, whatever their intrinsic value, are out of place in a commemoration of Bunker Hill ? That question has been settled before. It was settled when Mr. Webster was the orator at the completion of our monument. You know it has often been held that the first indications of the American revolution were given when Samuel Adams, in his Master's address at Harvard College, asserted the right of the governed to resist their governors in cases of tyranny. This was in 1743. In almost exactly a century, Mr. Webster delivered his memorable oration. He had just risked his popularity with the entire country by concluding the extradition and boundary treaties with England, for which he was equally abused by General Cass and Lord Palmerston. I hold that act of his showed what a mighty advance we had made in a hundred years,—that if the words of Samuel Adams in 1743 paved the way for American Independence of England, the work of Daniel Webster in 1843 paved the way for eternal friendship between the former subject and the former mistress. Such was the view of our centennial orator, Judge Devens, as fearless a soldier as ever lived, who prayed as follows on the seventeenth of June, 1875 :

" Peace forever with the great country from which the day we commemorate did so much rudely to dissever us ! If there were in that time, or if there have been since, many things which we could have wished otherwise, we can easily afford to let them pass into oblivion." (*Author's Edition*, p. 50.)

This very fourteenth of October might lead us to pause before we let the blaze of military glory dazzle us out of the contemplation of purer lights. On the fourteenth of October, 1066, William of Normandy slew the noble-hearted Harold, and for a time buried the ancient liberties of England. Their vitality was too strong not to rise again when a century and a half had gone away. But the battle of Hastings fastened upon the island that Norman military aristocracy, whose privileges have been handed down from noble to noble for twenty five generations, and the wisest heads in England are bewildered at the difficulties in the way of their removal. And yet there are Americans who would go back to emulate that feudal conqueror, and create a soldier caste in this land.

Let such, let all of us, listen to the yet holier and more touching call which the day of Bunker Hill and the name of Prescott give us, to sheathe the sword between rival nations, and exhibit it only as an antique trophy. While William Prescott was directing the shots on Bunker Hill, John Linzee was delivering the broadsides of the "Falcon" against the redoubt. In fifty years the grandson of Prescott and the granddaughter of Linzee were married, and their posterity is still with us, full of promise. There hung in the library of the historian, there hang now in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the swords that Prescott and Linzee wore on that day, crossed not in strife, but in peaceful symmetry. There may they hang forever, as a symbol that the softening of the rough ages, by the disuse of wars, is not the mere vision of a heathen poet, but indeed the veritable song

brought down from heaven by the angels ; there may they hang forever, — or rather, if ever evil passions on either side of the ocean seek to drive us into the sin and crime of war, let them be transferred to the Department of State at Washington, where those who conduct the diplomacy of the United States, looking at them upon the wall, and through the window upon the monument of the Father of his country, may feel their spirits chastened and their souls raised from the low swamp of battle to the soaring heights of peace. Then let the war god sink into the embrace of all conquering love, and let the genius of peace throw over their limbs the resistless network of the arts, that all the gods of Olympus may come and behold the spectacle of men's claims yielding to their duties, and Moloch prostrated before Jesus.

LETTERS.

[Many letters of regret were received by the Committee of Arrangements
A few of these letters are here printed.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, October 1, 1895.

HENRY H. EDES, Esq.

Chairman Committee of Arrangements,
28 State Street, Boston, Mass.

MY DEAR SIR,—I take pleasure in acknowledging the invitation of the Bunker Hill Monument Association to be present on the 14th of October, at a service to be held in Boston in commemoration of Colonel William Prescott, Commander of the American forces in the redoubt at Bunker Hill.

I highly appreciate the compliment conveyed by the invitation of the Association as well as the flattering terms in which you chose to give expression to it. I regret, nevertheless, that I shall be unable to be in Massachusetts on the day named. I remain,

Very truly yours,

RICHARD OLNEY.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF POSTMASTER GENERAL,
WASHINGTON, D. C., October 3rd, 1895.

HENRY H. EDES, Esq., *Chairman, etc.,*
28 State Street, Boston, Mass.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the invitation which you so kindly extend to me, in the name of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, to attend its proposed

commemoration on the 14th of October of the services of Col. William Prescott, commander of the American forces in the redoubt of Bunker Hill.

It would give me great pleasure, as an American citizen, to participate in this memorial service, and especially to be privileged to listen to the oration of Dr. Everett. I regret, however, that the pressure of public business will not permit my leaving Washington at that time.

With most cordial thanks for the invitation, and for the courteous words in which you communicate it, I am, dear sir,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. L. WILSON.

UNITED STATES COURTS,

BOSTON, October 7, 1895.

DEAR SIR,—The necessity of being in Washington on the fourteenth makes it impossible for me to accept the courteous invitation of the Bunker Hill Monument Association to attend its services on that day, to my great regret.

Truly yours,

HORACE GRAY.

MR. HENRY H. EDES.

UNITED STATES SENATE,

WORCESTER, Mass., October 7, 1895.

DEAR MR. EDES,—I am afraid it will be utterly impossible for me to attend the services in commemoration of Colonel Prescott. It will be a delightful occasion, and I am exceedingly tempted by it. But my time is otherwise pledged.

I am faithfully yours,

GEO. F. HOAR.

HENRY H. EDES, Esq.

GROTON, October 10, 1895.

MY DEAR SIR,— I very much regret my inability to be present at the service to be held Monday evening, the 14th instant, in commemoration of Colonel William Prescott.

Colonel Prescott was born in Groton, and the inhabitants of the town have never failed to feel an interest when due honors have been paid to his memory.

Very truly, GEO. S. BOUTWELL.

To HENRY H. EDES, Esq., Boston.

BOSTON, October 7, 1895.

Mr. HENRY H. EDES,
28 State Street, Boston, Mass.

DEAR SIR,— I have received the kind invitation from the Bunker Hill Monument Association, to attend the service in commemoration of Col. William Prescott, on Monday evening, October 14th.

I am greatly disappointed to say that a prior engagement made for that night, makes it impossible for me to be present. I regret this extremely, as I should very much enjoy hearing the oration of Dr. Everett.

Yours very truly, WM. E. RUSSELL.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE,
WILLIAMSTOWN, Mass., October 7, 1895.

MY DEAR SIR,— I am in receipt of the invitation of the Bunker Hill Monument Association Committee to be present at the service in commemoration of Colonel William Prescott on Monday evening the 14th inst.

I am extremely sorry that it will not be possible for me to be present. Please accept my cordial thanks for your invitation and my assurance of the pleasure it gives me to know that such a service is to be held.

Very sincerely yours,

FRANKLIN CARTER.

HENRY H. EDES, Esq.

Professor Norton greatly regrets that a positive engagement for Monday evening, the 14th inst., deprives him of the pleasure of accepting the invitation, with which he has been honored by the Bunker Hill Monument Association, to be present at the service in commemoration of Col. William Prescott.

CAMBRIDGE, 7 October, 1895.

Mr. John Lee Carroll regrets very much that imperative engagements will prevent his acceptance of the cordial invitation to attend the service in commemoration of Col. William Prescott, on Monday evening the 14th inst.

THE MANOR, October 7th.

MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES
COMMANDERY-IN-CHIEF.

MADISON, WISCONSIN, October 10, 1895.

DEAR SIR,—I regret very much that I cannot accept your kind invitation to the service in commemoration of Colonel William Prescott on the 14th inst., and thank you heartily for thus remembering me.

I shall be in Washington on that day to attend the Annual session of the Loyal Legion.

I am, dear Sir,

Respectfully yours,

LUCIUS FAIRCHILD.

To HENRY H. EDES, Esq.

Boston, Mass.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01041 2247